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ABSTRACT

This report covers the second part of a 3-year study of substance abuse prevention and intervention programs in the New York City Public Schools. For the second part and the subject of this report all schools were sent a 13-part survey seeking information on the range and scope of substance abuse prevention and intervention services provided in that school. Surveys were returned by 923 of the 930 schools. Chapter I describes the background of the project, briefly reviewing findings of the 1990-1991 study before turning attention to the current study. Chapter II presents the results of the survey of students participating in intervention counseling. Chapter III discusses the SPARK Peer Players' role in the high school substance abuse prevention program. Chapter IV describes staff development offered by Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialists (SAPIS) and parent outreach efforts. Chapter V offers evaluators' conclusions and recommendations based on the data analyzed in this report. The document concludes that intervention services and consistent support from professional staff are vital for at-risk youth, and that peer programs are effective prevention strategies, but need to be supported by district administrators, school staff, and parents, and efforts to involve both teachers and parents in substance abuse prevention need to be increased. (Author/NB)

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OREA Report

SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION SERVICES IN THE NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

1990-1991 SURVEY RESULTS

NOVEMBER 1993

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the request of the Chancellor of the New York City Public Schools, the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA) undertook a three-year study of substance abuse prevention and intervention services offered in the public schools. The first part of the study examined exemplary services offered by many substance abuse prevention and intervention programs. For the second part, the subject of this report, all schools were sent a thirteen-part survey seeking information on the range and scope of substance abuse prevention and intervention services provided in that school. Surveys were returned by 923 of the 930 schools. District directors and borough supervisors were also sent surveys requesting information on districtwide services. The information requested fell into four broad categories: staff development services, prevention services, intervention services, and services aimed at both prevention and intervention.

The overall numbers of schools and districts offering particular services reflect several factors. Each community school district and high school borough is allocated funds for substance abuse prevention and intervention services based on both the numbers of students enrolled in schools and their Chapter 1 eligibility. Districts may receive additional funds through a variety of means. Each district and borough then decides how to allocate the resources available to them, according to the perceived needs of their staff, students, and communities.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Staff Development

An important part of the New York City Public Schools' substance abuse prevention (SAP) program is the training of instructional staff, substance abuse prevention program staff, and other personnel for the delivery of substance abuse prevention and intervention services. New York City's substance abuse prevention program provides three kinds of staff development, corresponding to the different groups being trained: SAP program directors and assistant directors, SAP staff, and school staff. As part of this research, staff development at both the district level and the school level were surveyed.

Substance abuse prevention staff development. Surveys were distributed to the thirty-two district directors and five borough supervisors responsible for the SAP prevention programs in their region. All of the surveys were completed and returned to OREA.

School staff development. Most New York City Public Schools receive some staff development from the district or high school

SAP programs. These programs are the primary vehicle through which school staff gains information about substance abuse prevention services in the schools, and learns how they can participate in prevention and intervention efforts. School staff development is provided by substance abuse prevention programs in 728 schools, or 79 percent of the schools surveyed--81 percent of the primary schools, 80 percent of the middle schools, and 65 percent of the high schools.

Prevention Services

Prevention services are distinct from intervention services in that they do not assume a pre-existing substance use/abuse condition, but rather seek to anticipate and deter such behavior. Prevention activities are directed not only at students, but also at school staff and parents who, in their interaction with students, may be able to positively influence their behavior. The prevention activities studied as part of this research were classroom prevention lessons, discussion rap groups, parent workshops, and parent leadership training.

Classroom prevention lessons. Classroom substance abuse prevention lessons form the foundation of the SAP programs in the New York City Public Schools. Ninety-seven percent of all responding schools provide classroom lessons -- 97 percent of primary schools, 99 percent of middle schools, and 95 percent of high schools.

Discussion rap groups. This activity has two major purposes: to give students a safe environment in which to discuss their feelings and problems, and to provide a non-threatening introduction to substance abuse prevention services. A total of 718 New York City schools (78 percent of those surveyed) offer discussion rap groups as part of their array of substance abuse prevention and intervention services (72 percent of primary schools, 89 percent of middle schools, and 92 percent of high schools).

Parent workshops. The main objectives of parent workshops are to involve parents more actively in their children's development, give parents a forum in which to discuss problems and questions, help parents to establish support networks with other parents, help parents recognize their common experiences, and give parents the opportunity to share information and assistance, both within and outside of the workshop. Six hundred seventy-four schools offer parent workshops (73 percent of all schools surveyed). They are provided by 76 percent of primary schools, 80 percent of middle schools, and 44 percent of high schools.

Parent leadership training. Parent leadership training attempts to involve parents more actively in their school-age

children's lives by training them to lead parent workshops and act as outreach workers and group facilitators. Furthermore, parent leadership participants can influence other parents and develop mutually supportive relationships with other parent leaders. Of the 925 schools that were surveyed as part of this study, 178 offer parent leadership training (19 percent)--20 percent of primary schools, 23 percent of middle schools, and only nine percent of high schools.

Intervention Services

Intervention services address the needs of highly at-risk students. These students generally have family problems, such as substance abuse, a criminal history, domestic violence, illness, and divorce. In such cases, they may benefit from direct intervention to help them cope with their existing problems and develop the skills necessary to resolve their problems. Often intervention is in the form of counseling--for individuals, groups, children of alcoholics/children of substance abusers (COA/COSA), or families. Intervention also includes referral to alternative schools and community based agencies, and the provision of crisis intervention.

Regular intervention groups. Also known as group counseling, regular intervention group services bring together students who share certain characteristics, such as age, grade, gender, or particular problem area, to discuss their problems and concerns in an open and trusting, but structured environment. These groups are usually facilitated by a substance abuse prevention and intervention specialist (SAPIS) (or in a few cases by guidance counselors, social workers, or teachers). This service is offered in 502 schools, or 54 percent of those surveyed--43 percent of the primary schools, 73 percent of the middle schools, and 92 percent of the high schools.

Children of alcoholics/children of substance abusers. Children of alcoholics (COA) and children of substance abusers (COSA) have unique needs, and require special assistance in dealing with their problems. Many of the schools' substance abuse prevention programs are able to provide that assistance through COA/COSA intervention groups. This service is offered in 34 percent of the schools surveyed (n=311)--26 percent of primary schools, 40 percent of middle schools, and 68 percent of high schools.

Family counseling. Clinical counseling services are provided for families of students in need in many districts. A range of services is generally offered during day and evening hours. Forty-three percent of the schools surveyed (n=392) offer this service--35 percent of primary schools, 55 percent of middle schools, and 64 percent of high schools. One family counseling

service is offered districtwide, rather than through a particular school.

Alternative school programs. This component of the school-based substance abuse prevention program offers short-term, comprehensive intervention services for students particularly at-risk. The goal of these programs is to return the students to their mainstream schools, with the skills to deal more effectively with the pressures they may face. Some schools are self-contained alternative schools, others simply offer self-contained alternative classes, and still others have self-awareness centers. Only seven percent of the schools surveyed (n=63) have alternative school programs--five percent of the primary schools, ten percent of the middle schools, and 15 percent of the high schools.

Prevention/Intervention Services

A number of activities provided in the substance abuse prevention and intervention program combine prevention and intervention services. After-school services, summer programs, and special arts activities all offer an array of program components comprising both prevention and intervention services. Peer leadership training and activities integrate intervention and prevention strategies, allowing them to work simultaneously to address several dimensions of need with a single service.

Peer leadership training and activities. This program attempts to capitalize on the strong influence of students on their peers by having students provide prevention and intervention services to their peers. Three hundred seventy-eight schools (41 percent of all schools returning overall surveys) responded to the peer leadership training and activities survey--33 percent of primary schools, 66 percent of middle schools, and 43 percent of high schools.

After-school services. After-school services may include a broad array of both prevention and intervention activities. Thirty-two percent of the schools surveyed (n=298) offered after-school services--30 percent of primary schools, 40 percent of middle schools, and 28 percent of high schools.

Creative arts activities. Special creative arts programs are utilized by substance abuse prevention programs to reach students who may be at risk. These include art activities, drama, music, poetry, writing, and dance. Through these programs, students gain skills and positive experiences. Special arts activities are offered in 46 percent of the schools surveyed--47 percent of primary, 49 percent of middle, and 38 percent of high schools.

Summer programs. Summer programs offered by the substance abuse prevention programs are all provided on a districtwide basis, although they are housed in individual schools. Summer programs, including a broad range of prevention and intervention activities, are offered by 31 of the 32 community school districts (97 percent). Three of the five high school boroughs also provide summer programs.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is substantial variability among schools in the structure of substance abuse prevention and intervention services. Differences are apparent in staffing, the organization of services, the delivery of services to students, and the evaluation of services. While this report simply documents this variability, analyzing such differences may be very beneficial for improving substance abuse prevention and intervention services in the future. In light of these findings, OREA offers the following recommendations:

- Examine staffing patterns in the community school districts and high school boroughs to determine the reasons for a predominance of substance abuse prevention staff with fewer than five years of experience.

- Train substance abuse prevention staff to conduct self-evaluations of each of their programs. These evaluations should be simple, systematic, and standardized. They should include reflections from the person delivering the service as to its perceived success.

- For each of the services, evaluate the impact of basic differences in the delivery of the program. This should include variables such as who delivers or facilitates the service, the groupings of students receiving the service (i.e. the numbers of students per group, whether or not they have similar problems, etc.), and the content of the service.

- Increase the awareness of school staff of the substance abuse prevention services provided in their schools and districts. This may be accomplished through more extensive staff development sessions and greater publicity regarding substance abuse prevention services in the school community.

- Greater communication among community school districts and high school boroughs regarding the outcomes of the evaluations of their services outlined above--sharing and comparing the information received--would increase the ability to provide the most effective services. This would benefit all students, parents, and staff who participate in substance abuse prevention and intervention programs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report has been prepared by the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (O.R.E.A), of the Division of Strategic Planning/Research and Assessment. As with all reports from this office, this one represents the contributions of many people.

The Office of Substance Abuse Prevention provided continued assistance and support of O.R.E.A.'s research efforts. Judith Stern Torres developed the design of this study. MaryAnn Castle developed the research instruments, with comments and suggestions from Alice Riddell, Jody Imbimbo, Leah Koenig, and Joanna Gould-Stuart. Martha Hare and Adeola Joda managed the collection of the surveys. Adeola Joda supervised the data entry, which was done by Rosemary Ryan, Miguel Batista, and Ravi Kolluru. Adeola Joda and Ravi Kolluru also analyzed the data. This report was written by Nina Gottlieb and Margaret Schehl.

A special note of thanks is due to the directors of the community school district substance abuse prevention programs, supervisors of high school boroughs' SPARK programs, and school-based substance abuse prevention staff who completed the extensive surveys that form the basis for this report.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The New York City Public Schools have provided school-based and districtwide substance abuse prevention and intervention programs for students since 1971. Over the years, the range and scope of services offered by these programs has grown and changed. The aim of the study described in this report, which was conducted in the spring of the 1990-91 school year by the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA), is to document previously unreported information on the number, nature, and range of substance abuse prevention (SAP) services currently provided in the New York City Public Schools.

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Studies Conducted in 1990-91

This report is part of a three-year study of substance abuse prevention services in the public schools which has been undertaken at the request of the schools' Chancellor. The first part of the study examined some of the exemplary services offered by many substance abuse prevention and intervention programs. Researchers observed many of these exemplary services in the schools, and conducted a number of on-site interviews with Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialists (SAPIS), teachers, administrators, and students. The results of this study were presented in a report titled "Substance Abuse Prevention Study, Year 1."*

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*A copy of this report can be obtained from Mabel Payne, Research Unit Manager, Room 507, 110 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201.

The second part of the study, which is the subject of this report, involved the distribution of two surveys: 1) a thirteen-part survey seeking information on the range and scope of substance abuse prevention and intervention services provided in each school, which was distributed to every public primary, middle, and high school in New York City--a total of 923 schools, and 2) a survey requesting information on districtwide services completed by district directors and borough supervisors of substance abuse prevention and intervention programs.

Evaluators used the data gathered through these surveys to create a database on the substance abuse prevention services provided in each of the schools, and on a districtwide basis. This report presents the quantitative findings from these surveys. Where appropriate, we have provided examples of particular services from the report of the field study noted above.

Funding for Substance Abuse Prevention Services

The provision of substance abuse prevention services to students in each district or high school borough (and therefore each school) depends on several factors, one of the most important of which is available funding. Funds are allocated for substance abuse prevention services to each district and high school borough on the basis of the numbers of students enrolled in the schools in that district or borough, and each school's

eligibility for Chapter 1 funding.* In general, districts located in wealthier neighborhoods receive less money for substance abuse prevention services than districts in poorer neighborhoods. The central Office of Substance Abuse Prevention for the New York City Public Schools may also seek funding from public and private agencies for special programs in particular districts. In addition, district directors and high school borough supervisors may apply for grants from other sources to supplement their substance abuse prevention programs. Based on the funds received from any and all of these sources, each district and high school borough then makes choices about the services they can provide to students (and staff) in the schools in that district. With unlimited resources, perhaps each district and borough would provide all possible substance abuse prevention and intervention services to all of their students; given limited funding, however, districts and boroughs make individual decisions about how to best allocate resources. The information presented in this report indicates the results of those organizational decisions.

METHODOLOGY

As noted above, two surveys were used to gather data about

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*Chapter 1 is a federal funding source for remediation programs designed to address student needs in basic reading, writing, mathematics, and English-language skills. A school is eligible for Chapter 1 funds if its percentage of low-income students is equal to or greater than the citywide average based on a formula which calculates students' eligibility for free lunch and Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Students are eligible for Chapter 1 remediation programs when they score below the state reference points on standardized tests.

districtwide and school-based substance abuse prevention andintervention services offered in New York City's public schools. One survey was developed in conjunction with a panel of expert advisors. This thirteen-part survey reflected the most commonly provided substance abuse prevention services--ranging from classroom prevention lessons to school staff development. Packets of the survey were distributed to all thirty-two community school district (C.S.D.) substance abuse prevention directors, who in turn distributed packets to each primary and middle school in their district--a total of 635 elementary and 189 middle schools.* The five high school borough supervisors also received survey packets, to be distributed to 106 high schools in their boroughs participating in the SPARK substance abuse prevention program.

Individual school-based substance abuse prevention (SAP) staff then completed the forms, sometimes with the assistance of their district director or borough supervisor. OREA staff also provided assistance in completing the surveys to those who requested it, in an effort to obtain data on every school in the city. A total of 923 surveys were collected from the district directors and borough supervisors (a response rate of 99 percent), representing 633 primary schools, 184 middle schools, and 106 high schools.

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*In some cases, directors distributed surveys to alternative and mini-schools, which may not otherwise be considered as separate schools.

District directors and high school borough supervisors were asked to complete another survey requesting information about staff development provided to school-based substance abuse prevention and intervention staff, and about additional services offered by the district which may not have been covered in the thirteen-part survey completed by the school-based staff. A number of directors and supervisors provided data on additional services offered in their districts.

SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

In spite of OREA's efforts to gather complete information about substance abuse prevention services provided in all of the city's public schools, it was impossible to anticipate all the variations that might occur in SAP staff's responses to the questionnaire. For example, almost every part of the survey inquired about "evaluations" of programs by the participants. However, some programs, such as group counseling, are not normally evaluated by the participants, although district directors or the New York State Division of Substance Abuse Services (DSAS) may evaluate the program as a whole. Yet, many schools indicate that an evaluation did, in fact, take place, resulting in some confusion as to whether these were evaluations by participating students and/or staff or an evaluation of the entire program. Additionally, some schools may have interpreted the term "evaluation" to mean any and all feedback from participants about a particular service.

All of the substance abuse prevention and intervention services discussed in this report, with the exception of SAP staff development and summer programs (which are provided district-wide), have been analyzed according to school level.

The organization of this report corresponds to the two surveys. This chapter provided an overview of the study, including the research methodology and purposes. Chapter 2 contains findings on staff development. Chapter 3 then discusses services provided to students in the school as a whole ("prevention" services), Chapter 4 describes services provided to students identified as being at-risk ("intervention" services), and Chapter 5 discusses those services that include both prevention and intervention components. OREA's conclusions and recommendations are presented in Chapter 6.

II. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Staff development is an important part of the New York City Public School's substance abuse prevention program. It involves the training of substance abuse prevention program and school personnel in the delivery of substance abuse prevention and intervention services. New York City's SAP program provides three kinds of training corresponding to the type of staff being trained-- district directors, substance abuse prevention and intervention specialists (SAPIS), and school staff members, such as teachers and guidance counselors.

Directors of the community school district substance abuse prevention programs (referred to in this report as "district directors") oversee the substance abuse prevention programs in their districts. They control the allocation of funds they receive and organize the delivery of services in the schools and community. In addition, directors supervise the substance abuse prevention and intervention specialists (SAPIS) who work in the community and schools with parents, school staff, and students. High school borough supervisors perform essentially the same functions as district directors at the high school level. (In the high schools, substance abuse prevention and intervention staff are usually called "SPARK" counselors).

Training of both substance abuse prevention personnel and school staff were studied. The information on SAP staff training reflects the results of the survey of community school district

directors. The findings presented on school staff development were obtained from the thirteen-part citywide survey.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Surveys were distributed to thirty-two district SAP program directors and five high school borough supervisors. The surveys that were distributed sought responses to a number of questions on program staff development as well as additional prevention services provided at the district level.* All of the surveys were completed and returned to OREA.

Directors and their assistants receive training for their own knowledge, and to train SAPIS. This training is provided, according to most directors, by the Office of Substance Abuse Prevention (65 percent) and by Narcotics and Drug Research, Inc. (NDRI) at 51 percent. However, there are many other sources of training as well (49 percent). According to the directors' responses, these include, but are not limited to, seminars, workshops, a coalition of directors, and outside agencies.

SAP Staff Characteristics

The SAP staff is composed of three levels of SAPIS, with higher SAPIS levels corresponding to higher levels of training and responsibility. According to district directors and borough supervisors, there are 807 staff members in the SAP program. As Table I shows, of these, nearly half (401) were SAPIS Level II

*Throughout this report, "district level" will be used to refer to SAP program activities sponsored by community school district substance abuse prevention directors and/or by high school borough SAP program supervisors.

and more than a third (278) were SAPIS Level I. Only six percent of the staff members were SAPIS Level III. Ten percent were identified as "other." These were usually directors, assistant directors, teacher/SAPIS*, or associate staff members. The number of SAP program staff members in a given district varies widely. District directors and borough supervisors report anywhere from 13 to 65 staff members.

Table 1 (on page 10) also shows that, among staff members, the years of experience in the substance abuse prevention program varied. Nearly one-third of the staff members had 2-4 years of experience in the program (29 percent). More than a fourth were "new," with 0-2 years of experience (27 percent), and another fourth had 5-9 years of experience in the program (24 percent). Only 13 percent had been in the program for more than fifteen years, and even fewer (8 percent) had 10-14 years of experience in the program.

Staff members at different levels have varying degrees of experience, but for the most part, increasing staff levels correspond with increasing years of experience in the program. For example, a look at Table 1 reveals that most of the SAPIS Level I have less experience; they are "new" (40 percent), or have 2-4 years of experience (30 percent). Among SAPIS Level II, most have a mid-range of program experience. Thirty-two percent have 2-4 years of experience and 28 percent have 5-9 years. Most

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*Licensed teachers, paid by the drug prevention program, who perform the services of a SAPIS.

TABLE ONE

1991 - 1992

NUMBER OF DISTRICT STAFF BY LEVEL AND YEARS IN PROGRAM

YEARS IN PROGRAM	SAPIS I			SAPIS II			SAPIS III			OTHER[a]			TOTAL[b]		
	N	% SAP I	% YRS	N	% SAP II	% YRS	N	% SAP III	% YRS	N	%	% YRS	N	% SAP TOTAL	% YRS
NEW	110	39.57	50.69	88	21.95	40.55	3	66.38	1.38	16	19.75	7.37	217	26.89	100.0
2-4	84	30.22	36.21	130	32.42	56.03	2	4.26	0.86	16	19.75	6.90	232	28.75	100.0
5-9	48	17.27	25.13	114	28.43	59.69	16	34.04	8.38	13	16.05	6.81	191	23.67	100.0
10-14	23	8.27	37.70	27	6.73	44.26	8	17.02	13.11	3	3.70	4.92	61	7.56	100.0
15+	13	4.68	12.26	42	10.47	39.62	18	38.29	16.98	33	40.70	31.13	106	13.14	100.0
TOTAL[b]	278	100.0	34.45	401	100.0	49.69	47	100.0	5.82	81	100.0	10.04	807	100.0	100.0

[a] This category includes program directors, assistant directors, teachers providing SAPIS services and assistant staff members.

[b] Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding errors.

- About one-half of SAPIS staff were Level II, and about one-third were Level I.
- About one-fourth (27 percent) of the staff had less than two years' experience.
- In general, increasing staff levels corresponded with increasing years of experience.

SAPIS Level III staff members have 5-9 years (34 percent) or 10-14 years of experience (17 percent). Many of the "other" staff members are new (20 percent) or have 2-4 years experience (20 percent), and 16 percent of them have 5-9 years of experience. Interestingly, there are more SAPIS Level I (8 percent) than II (7 percent) with 10-14 years of experience, and of those staff members with fifteen or more years of experience in the program, there are more SAPIS Level II (15 percent) and "other" staff members (12 percent) than SAPIS Level III (6 percent) staffers.

When viewed by district and borough, the distribution of SAP staff is very uneven, ranging from ten in one district to 37 in another. The numbers of SAP staff in high school boroughs ranges from 42 to 65. For each level of SAPIS (except SAPIS Level III, with a range of zero to six), there is a broad range in the number of SAP staff members per district: one to 25 for SAPIS I, zero to 52 for SAPIS II, and zero to 21 for "other." The high end of the range is representative of only a few of the schools.

Characteristics of SAP Staff Training

District-level staff development sessions are generally used to train substance abuse prevention program staff such as SAPIS. Different class configurations are possible for providing staff development, including general classes addressing all SAPIS, classes differentiated by SAPIS level, or classes differentiated by content area. Districts may use more than one configuration, and the results of the survey indicate that many do. Most directors and supervisors report offering sessions conducted in

classes with all SAPIS (97 percent). Yet almost as many districts offer separate classes for new staff members (84 percent). And nearly half of the districts offer classes composed of SAPIS who were providing a common service (51 percent).

When asked to select from among several numerical ranges indicating the number of staff members trained in a given semester, most directors and supervisors indicated the higher ranges. More than half the survey respondents train more than 15 staff members (60 percent), while more than one-fourth train between 11 and 15 staff members per semester (27 percent).

The frequency with which substance abuse prevention program staff development sessions are held varies. More than three-fourths of the directors and supervisors report that sessions are held regularly, at the beginning of the school year (78 percent). Not quite as many districts have sessions at monthly staff meetings (70 percent), while many of the directors have other arrangements (62 percent); among those specified, "as needed" was the most common. Clearly, a response that sessions are held regularly at the beginning of the school year does not rule out the possibility that they are also held at monthly staff meetings and "as needed." Almost half the directors and supervisors (49 percent) conduct staff development during the summer, as well.

Training of SAPIS and program staff members may be conducted by a number of different organizations. All directors do at least some of the training themselves. However, other

organizations also provide training. For example, NDRI is responsible for training in almost nine-tenths of the districts surveyed (89 percent), and outside specialists do training in almost three-fourths of the districts. Among the outside specialists indicated were the New York State Division of Substance Abuse Services (DSAS), Bank Street College, and Mediplex. The Office of Substance Abuse Prevention of the New York City Public Schools does training in fully 60 percent of the districts.

In most of the districts/boroughs, the purpose of staff development is multi-dimensional. More than three-fourths of directors and supervisors indicate that the usual purpose of staff development is to increase skills in a particular area (78 percent). Yet, according to almost as many, it is to bring the SAP staff up-to-date on the state of the art in substance abuse prevention strategies (73 percent), and, for nearly half the districts, to train new staff members (43 percent).

Staff development sessions may cover a broad array of topics, as the list below demonstrates:

Program Philosophy and Concepts
How to Teach Lessons
How to Run a Group
Classroom Management
Counseling Techniques
Family Systems
Intervention Techniques
Available Resources
Suicide
Teenage Pregnancy Issues
Physical/Sexual Abuse and Neglect
Board of Education, District/High School Policies
Pharmacology
COA/COSA

Positive Alternatives
Peer Programs

When presented with the list of topics above and asked to identify those covered in their districts' staff development sessions for academic years 1988/89, 1989/90, and 1990/91, directors' responses to all the selections were high, increasingly so each year.* In 1988/89, every option was offered by between 49 and 70 percent of the districts. The most widely offered were Program Philosophy and Concepts, Intervention Techniques, and Pharmacology. In the 1989/90 school year, every single topic was offered by between 51 and 81 percent of the districts. The most widely offered topics for that year were Program Philosophy and Concepts, Counseling Techniques, and Available Resources. For academic year 1990/91, the top three responses were Program Philosophy and Concepts (97 percent), Available Resources (95 percent), and How to Teach Lessons (92 percent), though here again every topic was widely offered--in this case, by between 57 and 97 percent of districts.

In nearly all districts (97 percent), staff development includes consultations about specific cases, thus providing staff with supervision and support, as well as training. In nearly three-fourths of districts, those providing case consultation conduct the consultation individually with each SAPIS (73 percent), as compared to approximately one-fourth of districts in which case consultation is conducted with the entire staff (27

* This does not include the category "Other".

percent). About half the districts conduct case consultations on an as-needed basis (57 percent). The other half are divided between those conducting case consultation once a month (30 percent) and those providing it twice a month (16 percent).

The methods used to evaluate staff development tend to be informal, and many districts report using more than one method. Seventy-three percent of districts report that evaluation of their staff development program is based on oral feedback from participants. A little over half the districts report conducting evaluations through more formal oral feedback, included as part of the training (54 percent). More than a third of the districts use the even more formal method of distributing a post-questionnaire to participants once the staff development is completed (35 percent).

TRAINING FOR SCHOOL STAFF

Staff development for most schools is provided by the district or high school substance abuse prevention programs. The total number of schools that directors and supervisors report having in their districts ranges from 16 in District 16 to 51 in District 4 (reflecting many small schools within schools). Through SAP program training, school staff members learn about substance abuse prevention program services in their school, as well as ways in which they can contribute to substance abuse prevention and intervention. Approximately 80 percent of both the primary and middle school SAP programs and 65 percent of the high school SAP programs provide some kind of school staff

development. This staff development can take many forms--from introductory presentations at the beginning of each school year, to intensive, ongoing after-school training sessions with a small group of staff members.*

The purposes of staff development were fairly consistent across schools. Table 2 outlines the purposes of school staff development in elementary, middle, and high schools for 1990-1991. As can be seen on the table, the most frequently cited reason for staff development was to orient school staff to the substance abuse prevention program.

It appeared that survey respondents interpreted survey questions regarding "staff development" in different ways. Some indicate that staff development sessions are held once or twice per semester. Others (11 percent), in primary and middle schools, indicate that "staff development" takes place more frequently during the semester--anywhere from eight to 62 times. It appears that some of the SAP program staff members who completed this survey were under the impression that staff development referred to <u>any and all</u> communication between substance abuse prevention staff and teachers. Therefore, it is possible that there is some variation in the reliability of the information reported in the remainder of this section.

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*In year one of this study, on-site observations demonstrated this same variability in the duration and content of staff development sessions. Sessions observed ranged from a five minute presentation to a two hour session, the sixth in a series of ongoing training sessions.

More schools report a higher participation rate of general education teachers in SAP program staff development than any other staff members. The level of participation of general education teachers is highest at the primary school level (general education teachers participate in 79 percent of the primary schools providing school staff development), and decreases through middle (67 percent) and high schools (65 percent). However, the participation pattern for special education teachers is the opposite, with fewer schools including special education teachers in SAP program staff development in primary (42 percent) than in middle (53 percent) or high schools (55 percent). A similar pattern was found for the participation of guidance counselors--more high schools (62 percent) than middle (55 percent) or primary schools (54 percent) include guidance counselors in SAP program school staff development. (This may reflect the greater numbers of high schools with guidance counselors). Approximately one-third of all schools include family workers in the SAP program staff development. More primary schools (58 percent) and middle schools (55 percent) than high schools (39 percent) include principals and assistant principals in their staff development sessions. In about one-third of primary and middle schools, other administrative staff participate in SAP program staff training, while less than 20 percent of the high schools include other administrative staff in the training.

School staff development can be provided in one of two ways--separately, through the district substance abuse prevention program, or as part of the on-going school staff development program. Two-thirds of the primary and middle schools provide school staff development separately through the SAP program; one-third offer staff development as part of the district staff development program. In half of the high schools, staff development is offered as part of the high school staff development program; the other half provide it separately through the substance abuse prevention program.

The frequency, scheduling, and location of school staff training varies among schools. Schools frequently offer training through more than one means. At all levels, the most common time schedule for providing staff development (in three quarters of the primary and middle schools, and about half of the high schools) is at the beginning of the school year, during time scheduled by the district for teacher training. A large percentage of high schools (46 percent) use Regents week in January for staff development. About two-thirds of primary and middle schools provide training at their principal's conferences; one-third of these are scheduled once a year. Some schools (45 percent of primary schools, 38 percent of middle schools, and 17 percent of high schools) provide staff development at grade conferences, one or more times per year. A more extensive type of staff development is sometimes offered after school (18, 22, and 10 percent, respectively for primary, middle, and high

TABLE 2

Purposes of School Staff Development

	% of Primary Schools	% of Middle Schools	% of High Schools
Orient school staff to drug program	89.6	92.6	81.2
Introduce new components/services of drug program	82.0	82.6	69.6
Develop skills in affective domain	52.0	53.7	43.5
Help staff identify at-risk children	83.3	86.6	82.6
Increase knowledge of physical/sexual abuse and neglect	47.5	67.8	65.2
Increase knowledge of suicide issues	36.1	53.7	60.9
Increase knowledge of pharmacology	72.2	77.2	53.6
Increase knowledge of resources	80.8	85.2	63.8
Improve classroom management of at-risk students	53.1	59.1	46.4
Implement curriculum	63.5	45.0	43.5

- Survey respondents most frequently cited "orienting school staff to the drug (prevention) program" as the purpose of their staff development.

schools). Also, some districts provide staff training at lunchtime workshops, informal conferences, or at the district office. Approximately half of the primary and middle schools provide staff development in formally scheduled sessions; the other half provide it "as needed." Three-fourths of the high school SAP programs conduct school staff development as needed; the rest organize formal sessions.

School staff development is most often provided by the SAPIS, in over 80 percent of schools at all levels. In primary and middle schools, the training is also provided by the director in many cases (61 percent in primary schools; 63 percent in middle schools). In approximately one-third of the schools (at all levels), staff development is provided by outside resources arranged by the SAP program staff.

Evaluations of schools' staff development are generally informal, conducted through oral self-report in half of the high schools, one-third of the middle schools, and more than three-fourths of the primary schools. In about one-third of the primary and middle schools, participants complete pre/posttests or post-questionnaires. One-third of the high school SAP programs do not conduct evaluations of their school staff development at all.

III. PREVENTION SERVICES

Prevention services seek to equip students with the personal and practical skills necessary to resist substance use. They are distinct from intervention services in that they do not assume a pre-existing substance use/abuse condition or other at-risk status, but rather seek to anticipate and deter such behavior. Prevention activities are directed not only to students, but also to school staff and parents who, in their interaction with students, may be able to positively influence student behavior.

The students receive an array of services designed to maximize their ability to resist experimenting with drugs. This information is conveyed using a number of different prevention activities. [See Appendix I, prevention services figure]. Classroom presentations and lessons, discussion rap groups, peer leadership programs, assembly programs, positive alternatives and special events, summer programs, special arts programs, and after-school programs all attempt to inform students of the hazards of drug use and the pharmacological characteristics of different drugs, and to motivate them to remain drug-free. They also attempt to develop students' skills in coping, decision-making, and problem-solving, and to build self-esteem, clarify values, and help staff to identify students in need of intervention services.

Involving parents in the prevention process is an important part of substance abuse prevention. Through parent workshops, parent leadership training, conferences, special events, community presentations, and health fairs, parents learn about

the signs and symptoms of substance abuse, communication skills, limit-setting, family systems, the school substance abuse prevention program, and treatment resources and approaches.

The prevention activities studied as part of this research were classroom prevention lessons, discussion rap groups, parent workshops, and parent leadership training.

CLASSROOM PREVENTION LESSONS

Classroom substance abuse prevention lessons are the primary vehicle for communicating a wide range of anti-drug messages, and information about substance abuse, to all students in a non-stigmatizing environment.* Because all students receive the service, no student is singled out as problematic or at-risk. As such, these lessons form the foundation of the New York City Public Schools' substance abuse prevention program. Classroom prevention lessons serve a myriad of functions for students, teachers, and SAP staff members. The students are introduced to the SAP program staff and services available in their schools, and are often encouraged to drop by the designated SAP program office to discuss any problems or questions they may have. They also receive information about substance abuse and learn skills useful in resisting pressure to use alcohol and drugs.

Teachers may be present during classroom prevention lessons given by SAPIS, and learn about substance abuse prevention issues that they can incorporate into their regular lessons. Another function of the classroom lessons is to help the presenter and

*The data we received on the number of classroom lessons provided each year were unreliable, due to the varied interpretation of these survey questions; therefore, we will not report on these data.

the classroom teacher identify students particularly at-risk for substance abuse. Student responses to, and participation in, the lessons may indicate particular problems that require additional attention by the SAP program staff. Teachers may also learn how to refer those students to the SAP program staff in the school, should they identify at-risk students in the course of their daily interaction. Specific information about classroom lessons was solicited for kindergarten and for grades 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12.

The presenter of classroom lessons varies with different grades. Those who teach classroom lessons include SAPIS, classroom teachers, and police officers in the School Program to Educate and Control Drug Abuse (SPECDA). These police officers teach only fifth and sixth grade classroom substance abuse prevention lessons, on a full-time basis, in districts participating in SPECDA. Presentation of kindergarten children's lessons is somewhat evenly divided between teachers and SAPIS together (39 percent), SAPIS alone (31 percent), and regular classroom teacher alone (26 percent). In fourth grade, the SAPIS is primarily responsible for the lessons (54 percent), followed by the teacher and SAPIS together (36 percent). Generally, a team comprised of SAPIS and police officers who are participating in the SPECDA program teaches sixth graders in both primary and middle schools (27 to 30 percent), followed by teacher and SAPIS team teaching (18 percent). By eighth grade, the SAPIS once again teaches most of the lessons (50 percent), though the teacher and SAPIS teach a substantial portion together (44 percent). In 69 percent of the tenth grade classes and half of

the twelfth grade classes, the SAPIS has the primary responsibility for giving classroom lessons, with the teacher participating in about one-third of the lessons.

The substance abuse prevention program staff members (directors, assistant directors, or SAPIS) provide training to those personnel (SAPIS or teachers) giving the substance abuse prevention classroom lessons in two-thirds to over three-quarters of primary and middle schools, although, of those giving lessons to sixth graders in both primary and middle schools, only 40 to 45 percent are trained by SAP program staff members. In other primary and middle schools, district coordinators or educational administrators also provide training. Almost a third of the training for staff giving classroom lessons in grades four, six, and eight is provided by NDRI, DSAS, and SPECDA.* The SAP program staff provides training in 78 percent of the tenth grade classes and 51 percent of the twelfth grade classes; in over a third of the high school classes, however, training is provided by NDRI or other (unspecified) outside agencies.

The curriculum used to teach classroom lessons varies with the grade being taught--there are numerous substance abuse prevention curricula available for teaching prevention lessons. Some of these curricula are developed by individual substance abuse prevention programs, others are developed by New York State, and still others are commercially produced. In kindergarten, fourth grade, and sixth grade in primary schools, the two most commonly used curricula are those developed by the

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*Although the SPECDA program does not officially provide training, some survey respondents nonetheless indicated that such training was provided by SPECDA.

substance abuse prevention programs (30 to 63 percent) and by the New York State Education Department (27 to 50 percent). In middle schools, the New York State Education Drug curriculum is used somewhat more often (in 36 percent of sixth grade classes and 70 percent of eighth grade classes), though curricula developed by the SAP program are also widely used (in 30 percent of sixth grade classes and 68 percent of eighth grade classes). Many primary and middle school classes (24 to 46 percent) also use the New York State Alcohol Education curriculum. A substantial proportion of the schools (16 to 19 percent) indicate that they use a commercial curriculum, such as "Choose Yourself" and "Get Smart, Don't Start." Many districts (n=16) that have classes participating in the SPECDA program use a curriculum jointly developed by the New York City Public Schools and SPECDA. Over three-quarters of tenth grade classes and half of twelfth grade classes use curricula developed by the SAP/SPARK program. Several high school classes use various curricula developed by others, including the U.S. Department of Education and DSAS. Districts may often revise the curricula developed by others to meet their own needs.

Evaluations of classroom prevention lessons are primarily conducted through oral self-report in kindergarten (40 percent) and high schools (49 percent for tenth grade, 37 percent for twelfth grade), and through pre- and post-questionnaires in fourth (55 percent) and sixth grades (33 percent). Some high schools (less than one-quarter) indicate that borough supervisors "evaluate" their classroom lessons. In these cases, the presenter of the lesson may have been evaluated, rather than the

effectiveness of the lesson itself. Evaluations are also sometimes conducted through written self-report (20 percent) in high schools. Other methods of evaluation in primary and middle schools vary--they include teacher and/or principal evaluations of the lessons or use of DSAS evaluation forms, and in the case of one district, summaries of attendance reports.

DISCUSSION RAP GROUPS

Most New York City public schools offer discussion rap groups as part of their array of substance abuse prevention and intervention services (72 percent of primary, 89 percent of middle, and 92 percent of high schools). This activity has two major purposes: 1) to give at-risk students a safe environment in which to discuss their feelings and problems, and 2) to provide a non-threatening introduction to substance abuse prevention and intervention services, hopefully leading students in need to the greater commitment of enrolling in individual or group counseling.

Generally, students participating in this service meet in small, informal groups in an relaxed setting to discuss items of concern to them. Ideally, the shared feelings and mutual support lead to trusting friendships with their peers in the group and increased self-confidence, all of which strengthen decision-making and resistance skills.

The exact composition of discussion rap groups varies from school to school. However, at most primary and middle schools (60 to 66 percent), groups are composed of students from the same grade. At the high school level, on the other hand, virtually

all schools (94 percent) report groups composed of students from mixed grades.

Students may be referred for participation in discussion rap groups through classroom lessons, or by school staff, SAP staff, their peers, or themselves. At the primary school level, most participants are identified during classroom lessons (43 percent) and/or identified by school staff (60 percent) and then referred for participation in discussion rap groups. At the middle school level, most group participants refer themselves and/or are referred by school staff members (57 percent each). However, many are also identified during classroom lessons and/or are referred by SAP program staff members (38 percent each). Most high schools report that discussion rap group participants usually refer themselves to the groups (70 percent), though almost as many are "referred" by their peers (65 percent). Here, as in other services, students in higher grades are more likely to seek out the service on their own, or to be referred by a peer, rather than to be referred by a member of the SAP or school staff.

The number of rap groups per school varies. However, generally speaking, the higher the school level, the more rap groups present in the school. At the middle and high school levels, the majority of schools report having more than ten groups (42 and 54 percent, respectively). At the primary school level, most schools report having between one and three groups (36 percent), although almost as many report having more than ten groups (30 percent). At all levels, the majority of schools report having an average of eight discussion sessions per

semester (52 to 64 percent). Furthermore, most schools' discussion rap groups have between five and seven participants (71 to 81 percent of schools), though groups of eight or nine (20 to 27 percent) are common as well, and group size may vary from session to session.

Although the discussion rap groups' agendas are supposed to be, and many schools report them to be, open-ended (63 to 81 percent) and set by students (58 to 81 percent), a large number of schools at all levels report having a structured agenda (44 to 75 percent) and/or an agenda set by staff (59 to 62 percent). And although the majority of schools report having no formal curriculum (49 to 84 percent), at the primary and middle school levels almost as many report a program-developed curriculum (41 and 45 percent, respectively), which suggests that those programs are not entirely open-ended.

Respondents were asked to identify, from a list of discussion topics (see list below), those covered in their schools' discussion rap groups.

Sexual/Sexuality Issues
Physical/Sexual Abuse
Substance Abuse/Experimentation
Family Problems
Personal Problems/Feelings
School-Related Problems
Other

Most respondents identified Personal Problems/Feelings (71 to 83 percent), Substance Abuse/Experimentation (52 to 64 percent), and Family Problems (45 to 62 percent). Interestingly, for primary and middle school levels, the topic of Family Problems is ranked lower than the topic of Substance Abuse/Experimentation, while at the high school level, the converse is true.

Clearly, discussion rap groups are often a first step in the path to additional services. Virtually all schools report that some participants are referred for follow-up intervention services, especially at the higher levels. At the middle and high school levels, a plurality of schools report that the number of participants referred for additional services exceeds twelve (37 and 48 percent, respectively). At the primary school level, most schools report referring 1-3 participants (41 percent), though almost as many report referring 4-7 participants for additional intervention services (32 percent). The most frequently reported follow-up services, at all levels, are individual counseling (77 to 92 percent), group counseling (44 to 70 percent), and referrals to outside agencies (21 to 34 percent). Referral to family counseling is reported in some cases as well (4 to 16 percent).

Discussion rap groups are evaluated in a number of different ways, with some schools using more than one method. At the primary and middle school levels, the most common evaluation technique is the completion, by group participants, of a questionnaire, both before and upon termination of participation in the group, to determine changes resulting from group participation (83 to 86 percent). The other common techniques at these levels are having participants respond to a questionnaire after completing participation in the group (43 to 64 percent), and having participants verbally assess the effectiveness of the service (59 to 70 percent). At the high school level, evaluation is generally less formal than at the other levels, with verbal response by participants (68 percent) being the most common form

of evaluation reported. Furthermore, 20 percent of high schools do not conduct evaluations at all.

PARENT WORKSHOPS

Parent workshops are another widely used prevention activity. Seventy-three percent (N=674) of all schools surveyed report offering parent workshops. The main objectives of parent workshops are to involve parents more actively in their children's development, give parents a forum in which to discuss problems, questions, etc., and help parents to establish support networks with other parents.*

Generally, parents meet at the school with a SAPIS guiding the session. Their children--the students--meet simultaneously in another room and cover related material with another SAPIS. Any other children--the students' siblings--are left in a third room under adult supervision. After the workshop, parents and students meet in the same room to spend time together over snacks.

At the primary and middle school levels, most schools conduct parent workshops in a series of sessions over a period of weeks (21 to 25 percent), usually during the day (82 and 71 percent, respectively), though often during the evening as well (43 and 58 percent, respectively). Evidently, many schools offer sessions both during the day and in the evening. Many primary and middle schools report other scheduling arrangements as well, usually specifying "upon request" or as "as needed." High schools, by contrast, usually conduct parent workshops during the

*This information is taken from the year one report on interview results and services that were observed.

evening (84 percent), often only once or twice a year (36 percent), though almost as many conduct them in sessions spread out over a series of weeks (30 percent).

The number of participants in a given parent workshop session is extremely varied. Between 15 and 28 percent of all schools surveyed offer parent workshops composed of 2-10 participants. Sessions with 11-15 participants are reported by 23 to 33 percent of schools. Fourteen to 21 percent of schools have groups of 16-20 parents, while 19 to 26 percent claim groups of 21-40 parents. Groups of more than 40 are much less common, with only 4 to 9 percent of schools reporting them.

At all levels, the most commonly used outreach method was for parent or parent-teacher associations to send notices to parents encouraging them to attend the workshops (81 to 93 percent). Another widely used method was for schools to write letters to the parents, announcing the workshops and encouraging attendance (66 to 77 percent). Often, SAP staff members called parents about the workshops (23 to 40 percent). At the high school level, many schools (30 percent) report other methods as well, most often specifying phone calls.

Parent workshops are most often conducted, at all school levels, by a SAPIS (70 to 85 percent). At the primary and middle school levels, the substance abuse prevention program district director or his/her assistant may also conduct the workshop (32 and 34 percent, respectively). A substantial number of schools (19 to 27 percent) also used trained parent leaders (discussed in the next section). Many high schools report using other workshop

leaders as well; among those specified, social workers and guidance counselors predominated.

When asked to select from a list of parent workshop objectives (see list below), the three highest responses at all levels were To Orient Parents About the SAP Program (81 to 88 percent), Increasing Parents' Knowledge of the Signs and Symptoms of Substance Abuse (68 to 87 percent), and Improving Communication Skills (78 to 83 percent).

To Orient Parents About the SAP Program
To Educate Parents about Pharmacology
To Educate Parents about COA/COSA Issues
To Develop Parents' Skills in:
- Communication
- Limit Setting
- Child Development
- Dealing With Peer Group Pressure
- Signs/Symptoms of Substance Abuse
- Conflict Resolution
- Stress Management
- Problem Solving/Decision Making
- Other

About a sixth of the high schools (17 percent) report other objectives, specifically, dealing with anger, violence, and child abuse.

Evaluation of parent workshops is generally informal. At all levels, the most commonly reported evaluation method is for the parents to give oral feedback to the SAPIS (47 to 56 percent). At the primary school level, almost a fourth of the schools also report that the parents complete a questionnaire before, and then again after, the workshop (23 percent), which shows changes in the parents' knowledge, skills, and so forth. Many middle schools also employ this method and/or use a simple post questionnaire (28 percent each). At the high school level, one-fourth of all schools report that no evaluation is conducted.

PARENT LEADERSHIP TRAINING

In an attempt to involve parents more actively in their school-age children's social and academic lives, a number of schools have implemented parent leadership training programs. If parents participate in decision-making and service delivery at their children's schools, they will be more aware of the forces at play in their children's lives, and may be more actively involved. The increased participation and influence may also have an empowering effect on parents. Furthermore, by participating actively in the program, parent leadership participants can influence other parents and develop mutually supportive relationships with other parent leaders. Of the 925 schools that were surveyed as part of this study, 178 offer parent leadership training (19 percent)--20 percent of primary schools (126), and 23 percent of middle schools (43).*

Parents can be recruited for parent leadership training in a number of different ways, and many schools use more than one method. In most of the schools offering parent leadership training, the parent and parent-teacher associations send parents notices announcing the program and inviting them to participate (67 to 88 percent). At the primary school level, almost a third of the schools report that parents find out about the parent leadership training from a SAPIS. The same number of schools send letters to the parents (31 percent each). At the middle school level, SAPIS and school staff referral are also common (28

*Only nine high schools indicated that they conduct parent leadership training. With such a small sample, reporting on percentages may be misleading. Therefore, information received from these high schools will not be reported in this section.

percent each). Evidently, outreach is fairly comprehensive, employing a number of different, overlapping strategies. Nonetheless, the program is not that widespread, especially in high schools.

Parent leadership training is provided most often, at all levels, by the SAP program staff (60 to 70 percent). However, in one-fourth of primary schools and one-fifth of middle schools, parent leadership training is provided by the John Jay Parent Leadership Program--developed by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, together with other New York City substance abuse prevention, education, and judicial organizations. The John Jay Parent Leadership Project assembles steering committees comprised of school staff, parents, and community officials. These committees then develop plans for training parents and assuring that the strategies in the plan are implemented. The program trains parents in such areas as substance abuse prevention, detecting substance abuse in youth, community outreach, substance abuse and the law, leadership skills, and school policy. The goal of the program is to get parents to play a more active role in substance abuse prevention, at home, in school, and in the community.* It would be interesting to compare the John Jay program strategies and results with those of other parent leadership training programs.

The number of parents trained in a given school in a given semester varies. Most schools train 1-5 parents per semester (56 to 81 percent). However, in primary schools, training 6-10

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*Breaking the Chain: Fostering Drug Free Schools and Communities, p. 11. New York City Regional Drug Education Training Center.

parents per semester is not unusual (14 percent). A number of middle schools (14 percent) report training more than 19 parents per semester.

In most middle schools (53 percent), the average number of parent leadership training sessions is 1-4 per semester, though fully one-third of the middle schools offer 5-8 sessions per semester. In primary schools 33 percent of the schools report 5-8 sessions per semester and 28 percent report 1-4 sessions per semester. Nearly a third of the primary schools responding to the survey did not answer this question.

The curriculum for parent leadership training may be developed by the SAP program staff, as it is in most primary and middle schools (42 and 47 percent, respectively); however, at the primary and middle school levels, the John Jay Program (described above), is used by almost as many schools (41 and 37 percent, respectively).

Parent Leaders are trained in a variety of skills:

Leadership Skills
Organizational Skills
Group Facilitation
How to do Parent Workshops
How to Get Parents Involved
How to Refer Substance Abusers and Their Families
Empowerment

At the primary school level, 81 percent of schools report that most parents are trained on Leadership Skills. However, trainings on Organizational Skills (73 percent), How to Refer Substance Abusers and Their Families (73 percent), How to Do Parent Workshops (75 percent) and How to Get Parents Involved (78 percent), were also frequent. In middle schools, the skills most taught were How to Refer Substance Abusers and Their Families (70

percent), How to do Parent Workshops (72 percent), and How to Get Parents Involved (77 percent). Twenty-six percent of middle schools list Other subjects. Among these, the most common were pharmacology and substance abuse prevention information.

The number of parent leaders actually utilized to deliver services after completing training, is, in most cases, 1-5. In the case of middle schools, 81 percent train 1-5 parent leaders, but only 77 percent use 1-5 trained parent leaders. Evidently, for whatever reason, middle schools are not using all the parent leaders they train.

Once trained, parent leaders may engage in a number of different activities which vary from school to school. At the primary school level, 75 percent of schools used them as parent workshop leaders, 58 percent as group facilitators, and 43 percent as outreach workers. Fifty-six percent of middle schools indicate that they use the parent leaders to lead workshops or as resources for referrals, while almost as many (47 percent) use them as group facilitators.

The parent leadership training program is evaluated differently by different schools at different levels. At the primary school level, pre/post questionnaires completed by parents (44 percent) are the most commonly used evaluation method, but post questionnaires completed by parents and oral self-report by parents (34 percent each) are also common, and written self-reports by parents (23 percent) are not unusual either. At the middle school level, written self-reports by parents are most common (63 percent), followed by post questionnaires completed by parents (47 percent) and written

self-reports by parents and outside evaluation (35 percent each). Sixteen percent of middle schools report other evaluation methods, many specifying evaluation by program directors.

IV. INTERVENTION SERVICES

Intervention services address the needs of high-risk students, such as students with problems related to school or family. Such problems might include truancy or failing grades, or family problems related to substance abuse, criminal background, illness, domestic violence, divorce, etc. The goal of intervention programs is to provide troubled students with direct intervention services which hopefully will help them to develop the skills for coping with and resolving existing problems and avoiding new ones. Most often, direct intervention services are provided as counseling--individual, group, COA/COSA, or family--but these services can include referral to alternative schools, crisis intervention, and referral to community-based agencies as well. [Appendix I provides a visual representation of the distribution of intervention services in New York City Public schools by school level].

REGULAR INTERVENTION GROUPS

Regular intervention group services are offered in 269 primary schools (43 percent), 136 middle schools (73 percent), and in 97 high schools (92 percent). Clearly, group counseling is a widely used service, especially at higher school levels.

Students may be referred to regular intervention groups in a number of different ways; often, schools use more than one method. At the primary and middle school levels, most schools report that students are referred to group counseling by school staff members (77 and 66 percent, respectively). However, a substantial number also report that students refer themselves to

the service (43 and 60 percent, respectively). At the high school level, self-referral is most common (63 percent), followed by school staff (51 percent) and peer referral (49 percent).

In most primary and middle schools (71 percent), regular intervention groups comprise students from a single grade only, though almost a third of the schools have groups with students from mixed grades. Almost all high schools (91 percent) report groups with students from mixed grades. Groups are facilitated in virtually all cases by the SAPIS (91 to 98 percent). In a few schools, regular intervention groups are facilitated by guidance counselors, social workers, or teachers.

The number of regular intervention groups per school varies considerably by level, with high schools generally having more groups. At the primary level, more than half of the schools (58 percent) report an average of 1 - 3 groups, and almost a fourth claim an average of 4 - 6 groups. At the middle school level, 24 percent of schools report 1 - 3 groups, 24 percent report having more than ten groups, and an average of 4 - 6 groups is reported by 37 percent of schools. At the high school level, 7 - 10 groups per school is the most common response (35 percent), followed by more than ten (25 percent).

Group size also varies by level, with high schools generally having larger groups than primary and middle schools. At the primary and middle school levels, most schools report having an average of 5 - 7 participants in each regular intervention group (55 and 45 percent, respectively), though many report having more than 12 (18 and 26 percent, respectively). At the high school level, most schools have an average of 8 - 10 regular

participants (46 percent) per group, though many (27 percent) report having 5 - 7 participants.

When asked to indicate from among a list of possible ranges (from one to more than fifteen) the one which corresponds to the number of group counseling sessions provided by their school each semester, most schools select higher ranges. At the primary school level, one-third of schools report nine or ten sessions. Almost as many (30 percent) report more than 15. Most middle and high schools (36 and 60 percent, respectively) report more than 15 regular intervention group sessions.

Evidently, the higher the school level, the less structured the content of the group sessions. Half of the responding primary schools and nearly two-thirds of the middle schools (63 percent) report that the issues discussed in regular intervention groups are program-developed, while only 30 percent of responding high schools have program-developed agendas. Sixty-two percent of high schools report having no formal agenda, while only 37 percent of primary schools and 27 percent of middle schools make the same claim.

Of the topics covered during regular intervention group sessions (see list, following) the most common, at all levels, is Personal Problems/Feelings (90 to 97 percent).

Sexual/Sexuality Issues
Physical/Sexual Abuse
Substance Abuse/Experimentation
Family Problems
Personal Problems/Feelings
School-Related Issues

Also freqently discussed at all levels, are School-Related Issues (82 to 87 percent), Family Problems (81 to 96 percent), and

Substance Abuse/Experimentation (72 to 92 percent). At the high school level, where virtually all topics were commonly discussed, Sexual/Sexuality Issues (87 percent) and Physical/Sexual Abuse (80 percent) are also highly ranked. At all levels, a significant percentage of schools indicate covering other topics as well (17 to 32 percent); these include AIDS, pregnancy, divorce, suicide, and violence.

Regular intervention groups are evaluated very informally in the majority of schools at all levels, with oral self-report by students being the primary evaluation method (61 to 74 percent). At the primary and middle school levels, a number of schools also report using pre/post questionnaires completed by students (35 and 49 percent, respectively), and all school levels report a high percentage of other evaluation methods (22 to 30 percent). The specific responses vary, and overlap somewhat with the other options provided, but many indicate that their program is evaluated/monitored by the state Division of Substance Abuse Services. Again, it seems that the term "evaluation" may have been interpreted as following specific guidelines, rather than having the students provide feedback about the service.

CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS/CHILDREN OF SUBSTANCE ABUSERS

Children of alcoholics (COA) and children of substance abusers (COSA) have unique needs, and require special assistance in dealing with their problems. Many of the schools' substance abuse prevention programs are able to provide that assistance through COA/COSA intervention groups. These groups provide an open, supportive atmosphere, where students with common problems can help each other and unload the burden of feeling alone.

Groups specifically tailored for COA/COSA concentrate on breaking the cycle of family addiction and helping students to better cope with their situations. Students also learn that they are not responsible for alcohol and substance abuse problems in their families. For many students, this may be the only forum in their lives for sharing their problems with others who understand what they are going through.* It is somewhat unclear from the survey responses exactly how many of the COA/COSA participants are actually children of alcoholics or children of substance abusers, since, in many schools, these COA/COSA groups also include students with other problems.

The proportion of schools providing COA/COSA services increases from primary to high schools, with only 24 percent of primary schools, 40 percent of middle schools, and 68 percent of high schools offering such services. COA/COSA group participants in primary schools are generally selected through classroom lessons (66 percent) and school staff referrals (59 percent). A large proportion of the students are self-referred (40 percent), and some are referred by SAP program staff (19 percent). In middle schools, most students are referred by school staff (77 percent) or refer themselves (69 percent). In high schools, most students are self-referred (65 percent) or referred by school staff (61 percent); peers also refer many high school students to COA/COSA groups (51 percent).

COA/COSA intervention groups are provided in one of two ways; either through the regular SAP program, or through

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*This information was gathered from observations of services and feedback from students during year one of this study.

specialized programs dealing with alcohol (which have separate funding obtained through the New York City Public Schools) such as "Project Cope" or "Alcohol: The Gateway Drug." Most of these specialized programs are targeted for primary school students; therefore, it is not surprising that in 38 percent of the primary schools, COA/COSA groups are provided through these specialized programs, and 60 percent are provided through the regular SAP program. In both middle (62 percent) and high schools (78 percent), the majority of the COA/COSA groups are provided through the regular SAP program. A number of respondents at all levels do not specify how the COA/COSA groups in their schools are organized; it is unclear whether they are not knowledgeable about the organization of services, or if they simply neglected to answer the question.

The average number of students receiving COA/COSA services in each school increases from the primary to the high school levels. Between 40 and 49 percent of schools at all three levels have between 5 and 15 students in COA/COSA groups. However, about one-third (32 percent) of the primary schools, 40 percent of the middle schools, and almost half (49 percent) of the high schools have more than 15 students receiving COA/COSA services. In one school, as many as 89 students participated in COA/COSA groups. In high schools with more than 15 COA/COSA students, the average number of participants per school is 40.

Surprisingly, many schools report that COA/COSA intervention groups are not exclusively composed of students with family alcohol or substance abuse problems. Approximately one-third of the primary and high schools, but only 15 percent of the middle

schools, report groups composed only of COA/COSA students. Most COA/COSA groups (54 to 67 percent) include students who are referred for other problems. About half of the primary and middle schools have groups consisting of students in the same grade--slightly more than one-third of the schools have groups of students in mixed grades. In high schools, mixed-grade groups predominate (86 percent).

Most primary and high schools (about two-thirds) have between one and three COA/COSA groups; of the remaining primary and high schools, most have between four and six groups. The number of groups varies considerably in middle schools, with one-third of the schools having between one and three groups, 16 percent having four to six groups, and 13 percent having between seven and ten groups. The number of participants in each COA/COSA group ranges from fewer than four to twenty. One-third of the primary and middle schools, and slightly more of the high schools (39 percent), report that the average group size is between five and seven students. One-fourth of the middle schools indicate that the average group size is fewer than four students, while one-fourth of the high schools report that the average group consists of eight to ten students.

Nearly a third of primary schools (32 percent) indicate that their COA/COSA groups meet fewer than nine times in one semester. Another one-fifth (21 percent) meet more than 15 times per semester, with the actual number ranging from 17 to 45 sessions. Most middle and high schools (23 and 36 percent, respectively) report that the groups meet between 20 and 30 times per semester.

A substantial portion of the high schools (29 percent) report that groups meet between 11 and 15 times per semester.

Almost all the COA/COSA groups are facilitated by a SAPIS, at all levels (64 to 85 percent); in other schools, they are led by school staff or a SAPIS and a paraprofessional together. In a few schools, COA/COSA groups are facilitated by a guidance counselor or administrative staff. Most schools report that student participants in these groups also receive individual counseling (71 to 87 percent) and family counseling (60 to 69 percent), which are offered as part of the SAP program or through referrals to outside agencies. Teachers are primarily involved in COA/COSA intervention groups through feedback from the SAPIS (50 to 72 percent). Some teachers also receive information through grade conferences (11 to 43 percent), printed information (21 to 34 percent), or COA/COSA training (13 to 29 percent).

Evaluations of the COA/COSA intervention groups are conducted primarily through oral self-report by the students in 52 to 65 percent of all schools. Of primary and middle schools, a substantial proportion (37 and 41 percent, respectively) report that students are given a pre/post test, presumably in the context of an alcohol-specific classroom lesson through Project COPE, "Alcohol: The Gateway Drug," or one of the other separately funded, comprehensive alcohol prevention programs.

FAMILY COUNSELING

Many schools provide clinical counseling services for troubled students and their families. Family counseling services are most prevalent in high schools--64 percent of the 106 high schools responding to the survey provide these services, compared

with 55 percent of the 186 middle schools, and 35 percent of the 633 primary schools. A range of services is generally offered during day and evening hours.

The goal of family counseling services is to work with families to help them solve child-centered problems, including truancy, behavior problems, and suspected substance abuse, as well as problems within the family (such as alcoholism) that impact on children. One family counseling service is offered districtwide, in a counseling center, rather than through a particular school. Counseling centers may be located in community centers or in school district facilities.*

Most families with children in primary or middle schools who are referred for counseling are referred by the SAP program staff or school staff. In high schools, most families are referred by school staff, fewer by SAP program staff. About half of all families who contact family counseling centers initiate that contact themselves. Parent leaders refer one-fourth of the families in primary schools.

Family counseling services are provided primarily as needed, rather than as part of the SAP program. Counseling services are usually provided by a SAPIS. In about one-third of the primary schools, family counseling is provided by others, including guidance counselors, social workers, or personnel at family counseling centers. In 28 percent of the high schools, family counseling is provided by others, including social workers, guidance counselors, and drug education specialists.

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*This information is taken from the year one report, from services that were studied in more depth.

The number of families receiving family counseling varies widely. Not only do high schools provide proportionally more family counseling services for their students, but the demand for these services (and/or the capacity to provide them) is also greater than in primary or middle schools. In most primary and middle schools (75 and 80 percent, respectively), seven or fewer families receive counseling each semester. Although two-thirds of the high schools serve seven or fewer families per semester, one-fourth report providing counseling to more than ten families per semester.

Most schools and districts that offer family counseling services provide between one and four sessions for each family. However, many high schools (16 percent, n=11) provide more than ten sessions.

Nearly all schools providing family counseling services also refer families to outside agencies. Referrals are generally made in cases where the school or district does not have the capability to serve the numbers of families needing counseling, or where the families have particularly severe problems. In other cases, families may need long-term services which cannot be provided by the school/district.* In most cases, follow-up with families referred to outside agencies is conducted through telephone contact with the family or the referral agency. In many cases, face-to-face contact with the children of the families is used to check on the family's progress.

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*This information was gathered from interviews conducted during year one of this study.

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

This component of the school-based substance abuse prevention program offers short-term, comprehensive intervention services for students particularly at-risk. Students who are identified as exhibiting behaviors typically preceding or accompanying substance abuse generally receive academic instruction, individual counseling, and group counseling to assist them in dealing with their behavioral, emotional, social, and academic problems. These comprehensive services are offered either as alternative classes within regular schools, in self-awareness centers, or in self-contained alternative schools. Students attend these classes or schools for the regular school day. Parents often participate in these programs by attending parent meetings and receiving feedback about their children's progress. The goal of these programs is to return the students to their mainstream schools better able to deal with the pressures they may face.*

Five percent of the primary schools (n=29), ten percent of the middle schools (n=18), and 15 percent of the high schools (n=16) offer alternative programs for their students. Approximately one-fourth of these primary (n=7), middle (n=5), and high schools (n=5) have self-contained alternative schools. Another fourth of the schools which offer alternative programs at all levels do so in the form of self-contained alternative classes. Self-awareness centers are found in about one-fourth of

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*Breaking the Chain: Fostering Drug Free Schools and Communities, p. 8. New York City Regional Drug Education Training Center.

the primary schools, three of the middle schools, and only one of the high schools.

Students are referred to alternative programs in various ways at different academic levels. In primary schools, the most common referral method is by school staff (93 percent). The other two most frequent referral methods are through SAP program staff (41 percent) and self-presentation (31 percent). In middle schools, self-referral is most common (44 percent), followed by peer referrals (33 percent) and SAP program staff referrals (28 percent). In high schools, students are most commonly referred to alternative programs by school staff (81 percent), but also refer themselves (50 percent), or are referred by peers (31 percent) or SAP program staff (31 percent).

The reasons for students' referrals to alternative programs also vary according to school level; more than one reason was often cited. High school students are most often referred to alternative programs because of alcohol/drug experimentation (50 percent), family problems (50 percent), and/or negative acting-out behavior (44 percent). Middle school students show similar patterns, although these students are more often referred due to negative acting-out (67 percent) and academic failure (44 percent), in addition to family problems (44 percent). In primary schools, students are most often referred because of negative acting-out (83 percent), followed by family problems (55 percent) and academic failure (34 percent). Only 17 percent of primary school students are referred to alternative programs because of alcohol and/or drug experimentation.

The average number of students per semester in most (21 percent) of the primary alternative schools is 25 - 30; however, many (17 percent) of the alternative primary schools averaged more than 40 students in one semester. In most of the middle schools and the high schools (28 and 25 percent, respectively), the average number of students per semester is over 40, with slightly fewer middle schools (22 percent) and half as many high schools (13 percent) averaging 25 - 30 students per semester.

As expected, the alternative classes are much smaller than regular classes. The alternative classes at the primary school level most frequently (28 percent) average between 11 and 15 students per semester; middle school alternative classes average either 11 - 15 students per semester (28 percent) or over 15 students per semester (28 percent). The alternative classes in the high schools most frequently (44 percent) average 11 - 15 students.

Another type of alternative program is the self-awareness center. Most (31 percent) of the primary school self-awareness centers have an average of between 11 and 15 students. The average number of students in middle schools is evenly distributed (6 percent each) among the categories listed: 6 - 11 students, 11 - 15 students, and more than 15 students. The sole high school self-awareness center has more than fifteen students.

In primary schools, the average length of stay in alternative programs is most often one semester (34 percent), although a substantial number of respondents indicate the average length of stay as one to three months (28 percent) or two

semesters (24 percent). In most middle school (33 percent) and high school (38 percent) alternative programs, the average length of stay is two semesters.

Most of the students in alternative programs receive additional support services. In approximately three-fourths of the primary and high schools, and even more (78 to 83 percent) of the middle schools, students receive individual and/or group counseling. In about half of all alternative programs, students receive family counseling. While slightly less than half of the primary school alternative programs operate during the summer (41 percent), only one-fourth of the middle and high school programs are available in the summer.

Parents are involved in their children's alternative programs in a variety of ways. While a few programs structure parental involvement around meetings once a week or once a month, most parents at all levels are involved as often as needed. In some programs, however, parents are not involved at all. In most of the primary school alternative programs, parents are involved through regular feedback meetings (62 percent), family counseling (45 percent), and parent workshops (28 percent). Parents are involved in middle school programs primarily through parent workshops (50 percent), family counseling (39 percent), and regular feedback meetings (33 percent). In high schools, parents are most commonly involved through family counseling (38 percent), occasional meetings or school conferences, or parent workshops. Less than twenty percent of the high schools involve parents through regular feedback meetings.

About two-thirds of the primary and high schools (66 and 64 percent, respectively) and nearly all of the middle schools (89 percent) have written descriptions of their alternative programs. More than one-third of the middle schools (39 percent) and about one-third of the primary schools (34 percent) have a Parent's Handbook. Only one of the sixteen high schools reports having a Parent's Handbook.

While most high schools (62 percent) and middle schools (67 percent) have criteria for determining when students have completed their alternative programs, only 38 percent of the primary schools have specific criteria for program completion. Many of the respondents in primary schools did not respond to this question. Some of the survey respondents may have been confused as to whether or not these criteria exist. Those who did respond at the primary school level indicated that they generally use some sign of improvement to determine whether or not students have completed the program. These signs include progress with a particular problem, improved communication and coping skills, and satisfactory attendance and academic achievement. Other criteria for completion of the primary alternative programs focus on reducing negative behaviors.

Middle and high school programs indicate that they use a variety of more academically oriented criteria in their determination of program completion. For example, about half of the middle school respondents report that students have completed the program when they have performed satisfactorily at a certain level--when they have "good attendance and punctuality." Other responses are quite vague, such as "completion is when progress

is achieved" or "when students have a positive outlook on life." Some of the high schools use the resolution of students' particular problem areas as criteria for program completion; others use basic high school graduation requirements as a goal.

Alternative programs are generally evaluated in terms of how well students progress through the program. Student progress is evaluated in a variety of ways. Most (n=10) of the primary programs use pre/post questionnaires and program records to evaluate progress. Some schools (n=4) use teacher evaluations of students, in combination with report cards, and parent feedback. Fewer than half (n=8) of the middle schools offering alternative programs explained in the survey how they evaluate student progress. The evaluation techniques vary widely: they included pre/post questionnaires, weekly or monthly sessions with the students, consultations with teachers and parents, and weekly report cards. Techniques for evaluating student progress in high schools also vary. They include individual conferences, classroom observations, participation, and attendance. About one-fourth of the primary and middle schools and almost one-fifth (19 percent) of the high schools do not formally evaluate their alternative programs at all.

V. PREVENTION/INTERVENTION SERVICES

A number of activities provided under the substance abuse prevention and intervention program combine prevention and intervention services. After-school services, summer programs, and special arts activities all offer an array of program components comprising both prevention and intervention services. Peer leadership training and activities take this one step further, integrating intervention and prevention strategies, in order to enable them to work simultaneously and to address several dimensions of need with a single service. [Appendix I provides a visual representation of prevention/intervention services by school level].

PEER LEADERSHIP TRAINING AND ACTIVITIES

The peer leadership program is based on the principle that students exercise a great influence on each other, often more than that of teachers and other figures of authority. The program tries to capitalize on this tendency, by using students to provide prevention and intervention services to their peers. The program, thus, has two dimensions: training the peer leaders who provide the services, and developing and delivering the services to (at-risk) students. The scope of training and services provided differs markedly at different levels.

According to the results of field interviews conducted for year one of this study, the specific service components vary substantially by school level. At the high school level, peer leader training is intense and comprehensive (with participants

often meeting five or more times per week for a whole semester), reflecting the ability of older students to understand the concepts, make the commitment required, and deliver the services. Among the tasks peer leaders perform are presenting classroom prevention lessons, working with discussion rap groups and AIDS/HIV groups, working individually with at-risk students and students with adjustment problems, doing outreach to students with academic or attendance problems, etc. By contrast, at the middle school level, there is little, if any, training. Responsibilities include guest speaking in elementary schools, organizing drug-free mini school days with positive alternatives, organizing poster and essay contests, and participating in community television/radio shows. At the primary school level, students are not trained. The program seeks rather to enhance peer leaders' sense of independence, responsibility, and self-confidence, and thus, their ability to positively influence their peers.

A total of 378 (41 percent) of all schools responded to the peer leadership training and activities survey, including one-third of the primary schools, two-thirds of the middle schools, and nearly one-half of the high schools.

The results of the survey contradict those of the field study, particularly with regard to peer leadership training in primary schools. An overwhelming majority of primary, middle, and high schools report that peer leadership training takes place in school, during school hours (87 to 98 percent) and is provided by SAP program staff (85 to 95 percent). At all levels, peer leader trainees are most often selected by SAP program staff

members (61 to 74 percent), with referral by school staff members being almost as common (52 to 71 percent). At the high school level, however, self-referral and peer leader referral account for almost as many referrals as SAP program and school staff do (48 and 44 percent, respectively). Self-referral, here as in most services, increases with age.

The number of students trained in peer leadership varies from school to school and by level. Most primary schools train 5-9 students (52 percent), with many (31 percent) training more than nine (specific responses range between 10 and 64). At the middle and high school levels, most schools train more than nine students (50 and 63 percent, respectively), with specific responses ranging between 10 and 99 for middle schools and between 10 and 80 for high schools. Many middle schools (41 percent)* train 5 to 9 students. The intensity and complexity of training generally increases with school level. Training sessions are usually held once a week at the primary and middle school levels (65 and 59 percent, respectively), and some have sessions once or twice a month only. At the high school level, approximately one-fourth of high schools train only once a week. However, 61 percent of the high schools indicate that they make other arrangements. Most of these have sessions five times per week, or every day, and some claim to conduct training as often as two or three times per day.

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*The results of this survey conflict with the information received from personal interviews conducted in the year one study, which indicate that primary and middle school students receive little if any peer leadership training. This apparent discrepancy may be the result of the way in which the survey was structured; all endeavors or preparation occurring prior to actual peer activities were labeled as "training."

Peer leadership training covers a broad range of topics and judging from survey responses, high schools provide much more comprehensive coverage (see list, following).

Intervention Skills

Organizational Skills

Prevention Skills

Confidentiality/Ethics

Leadership Skills

Other

At the primary and middle school levels, the most frequently reported topics are Organizational Skills (75 and 76 percent) and Prevention Skills (71 and 67 percent), whereas at the high school level, the most common topics are Leadership Skills (91 percent) and Confidentiality/Ethics Skills (89 percent), with training in Prevention (80 percent), Intervention (74 percent), and Organizational (74 percent) skills almost as common. The fact that high schools tend to cover a broader range of topics than do primary and middle schools may be due to the greater ability of older high school students to provide the full range of services.

In most schools there is no formal curriculum for peer leadership training. The majority of schools do not use a standard peer leadership curriculum at all (52 to 64 percent), though many do (36 to 48 percent). At the high school level especially, almost as many schools use a standard curriculum (48 percent) as do not (52 percent).

After completion of training, most schools use 1-9 peer leaders. At the middle and high school levels, almost a third of respondents report using more than nine (with specific responses

ranging between 10 and 59 at the middle school level and between 15 and 35 at the high school level). The number of peer leaders used after training is fewer than the number receiving training, which suggests either that there is attrition in participation, that demand for training exceeds demand for services, or that the number of peer leaders trained exceeds the capacity for supervision of trained peer leaders.

Once training is completed, peer leaders may deliver a broad array of services:

Classroom Presentation/Lessons
Peer Counseling
Crisis Intervention
Peer Alumni
After-School Activities
Summer Programs
Other

Generally, primary and middle school peer leaders are used more for prevention lessons than are high school students, who do more peer counseling. When asked to select from the list of services that peer leaders deliver after completing training (see list above), primary schools' most cited activities were Classroom Presentation/Lessons (56 percent) and Peer Counseling (41 percent). Peer Counseling was the highest at the middle and high school levels (54 and 84 percent, respectively), followed by After-School Activities at the middle school level (53 percent) and Classroom Presentations at the high school level (63 percent). In virtually all cases, the peer leaders are supervised in these activities by the SAPIS (90, 80, and 80 percent, respectively for primary, middle, and high schools). It would be interesting to know more clearly and qualitatively what

peer counseling entails, as all students, even primary school students, are providing it.

Among activities undertaken by peer leaders, the most frequently reported activity at the primary and middle school levels is "organized events" (76 and 65 percent, respectively). At the primary school level it is followed by workshops (28 percent) and "other" (25 percent), in that order. However, a look at specific "other" responses reveals that many fall under the category of "organized events" (i.e, school-wide olympics). At the middle school level, "organized events" is followed in frequency by workshops (60 percent) and group counseling (37 percent). At the high school level, summer programs (98 percent) is the most cited activity, followed by "organized events" (76 percent) and group counseling (67 percent). All high school activities are quite frequently cited, though, demonstrating again a broader, more comprehensive approach at the high school level.

Evaluation of the peer leadership program, generally speaking, is informal. At all school levels--primary, middle, and high--the most common form of evaluation reported by schools is observation by SAP program staff (67 to 86 percent). For primary and middle schools, this is followed by observation by school staff (64 and 43 percent, respectively) and regular meetings with supervisory personnel (42 and 23 percent, respectively). At the high school level, these two categories are reversed, with the regular meetings with supervisory personnel (37 percent) being more common than the school staff observation (33 percent).

Although the survey results indicate that peer leaders at all school levels provide counseling for other students, it is hard to imagine that these services are equivalent at all levels. "Counseling" must vary more than is apparent at the different school levels, as the capacity of the leaders should vary with age. More in-depth and qualitative data would show differences. It would be interesting to see the impacts on peer leaders of participation in the peer leadership program.

AFTER-SCHOOL SERVICES

After-school services are provided to many students in New York City Public Schools, although the particular format and configuration of activities varies. Some districts have after-school programs that are provided districtwide, with services delivered in one or several schools that are available to students throughout the district. In other districts, individual schools each offer their own after-school program.*

Approximately one-third of the schools surveyed offered after-school services--30 percent of primary schools, 40 percent of middle schools, and 28 percent of high schools. After-school services may include any of a broad array of both prevention and intervention activities. Prevention activities include:

Peer Leadership Training
Peer Leadership Activities
Recreational Activities
Sports Activities
Discussion Rap Groups
Tutoring
Arts/Drama/Music Programs

*A number of surveys from schools in the same district indicated the same large number of participants. Very likely, these schools are located in a district that has a districtwide program, and the number corresponds to the overall number of participants in the districtwide program.

Positive Alternatives
Homework Help

Among prevention activities offered, the most popular at the primary level are Recreational Activities (74 percent), Sports Activities (50 percent), and Discussion Rap Groups (48 percent). At the middle school level they are Recreational Activities (51 percent), Sports Activities (49 percent), and Peer Leadership Training and Activities (33 percent each). Recreational Activities are the most widespread (47 percent) at the high school level as well, followed by Discussion Rap Groups (40 percent), and Arts/Drama/Music Programs (37 percent).

Intervention activities are somewhat more common at the high school level, than at primary and middle school levels. They include:

Group Counseling
Individual Counseling
Family Counseling
Referrals
Specialized Groups (e.g. COA)

Among intervention activities offered at the primary level, Referrals are the most common (26 percent), followed by Individual Counseling (21 percent) and Group Counseling (15 percent). At the middle school level, Individual Counseling is most common (29 percent), followed by Family Counseling (13 percent) and Group Counseling (11 percent). At the high school level, where intervention activities are more common, Individual Counseling is the most common activity (47 percent), followed by Group Counseling (27 percent) and Family Counseling (23 percent).

Most after-school programs, at all school levels, are offered on weekdays from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. (73 to 85 percent). And most primary schools (63 percent) report that students are

selected to participate in after-school activities by school staff members, although many (48 percent) refer themselves or are referred by SAP program staff (42 percent). In most middle and high schools (75 and 83 percent, respectively), students refer themselves for after-school activities, but referral by substance abuse prevention program staff (67 and 37 percent, respectively) and school staff members (63 and 23 percent, respectively) is also common. Several schools use parent and peer referral as well.

Most primary and middle schools report that their after-school programs are fully subscribed (68 and 65 percent, respectively). Almost a third of high schools (30 percent) report fully subscribed programs, but more than half (53 percent), report under-subscribed programs.

After-school services are provided in most primary and middle schools by the director/assistant director (52 and 40 percent, respectively), though many schools report using SAPIS Level I (24 and 27 percent), SAPIS Level II (21 and 33 percent), and SAPIS Level III (35 and 29 percent). At the high school level, however, fully 88 percent of schools indicate that SAPIS Level II provide after-school services. (There are no SAPIS Level I staff in the high schools.)

The majority of schools at all levels report that oral self-report by participants is their evaluation method (50, 60, and 77 percent, for primary, middle, and high schools, respectively), though at the primary level, written self-report by participants was not unusual (34 percent).

CREATIVE ARTS ACTIVITIES

Special creative arts programs are utilized by substance abuse prevention programs to reach at-risk students. These include art activities, drama, music, poetry, writing, and dance. In the writing workshops, for example, students considered to be at-risk participate in a special group which aims to improve writing skills and self-esteem while exploring critical personal issues. Students in one of these groups are asked to write about a particular feeling (i.e., "scared"), and then present their essays to the rest of the class. The group leader helps the students to correct their own mistakes. In this way, students gain writing and presentation skills and self-esteem, while having the opportunity to express their feelings and talk about family problems.* Students in some schools are also given the opportunity to express themselves through art, music, dance, and media arts. Through these programs, students gain skills and positive experiences.

Respondents were asked to report the numbers of students participating in arts prevention and intervention activities in their schools. The numbers of students involved in these activities varies widely across schools, suggesting that SAP program staff interpret the questions in very different ways. For example, the numbers of students involved in art prevention activities ranged from three to 1,200. While the lower end of the range might reflect the numbers of students actively engaged in some form of substance abuse prevention art activity on an

*This information is taken from the year one report, from services that were studied in more depth.

ongoing basis, the upper end of the range probably refers to a whole school population participating in a poster contest. Due to the obvious differences in the ways in which respondents answered these questions, reporting the average numbers of students participating in these special arts activities would be meaningless. Because of the confusion in the ways in which respondents answered questions in this section of the survey, it would be misleading to provide exact percentages. Therefore, only general patterns will be reported here.

Almost half of the primary and middle schools (47 and 49 percent, respectively) report providing special arts activities for their students. Thirty-eight percent of the high schools also provide some of these activities. Most of the primary and middle schools offering art activities include substance abuse prevention poster contests among those activities. Other art activities at all levels include school decorations, art therapy, and drawings for newsletters and special school events.

The drama activities most often provided include theater groups, role-playing activities, and video productions. Music activities most often include participation in choral groups, and learning to play a musical instrument. The most frequently reported poetry activities include writing poetry about feelings as a follow-up to another prevention or intervention activity, and writing poetry for a newsletter.

Writing activities vary according to school level. In the primary schools, writing most often includes participation in writing workshops (described above) and essay contests. Most of the middle schools offering writing activities also provide essay

contests and writing for student- or program-developed newsletters; some middle schools also have writing workshops. In many of the high schools providing SAP program-sponsored writing activities, students participate in writing for newsletters; almost a fourth of these high schools also have writing workshops for their students.

Dance activities at all levels most often include modern dance and folk/cultural dance. In middle schools, dance is sometimes reported to include cheerleading activities.

However, the responses do indicate differences between activities that are considered to be prevention or intervention. In nearly all cases, arts activities (art, drama, writing, dance, music, and poetry) are utilized much more frequently as methods of prevention than intervention. In high schools, however, poetry is used equally as a tool for prevention and intervention.

Of the six types of arts activities offered (art, drama, music, poetry, writing, and dance), those most frequently used at all levels are art, writing, drama, and music. At the primary and middle school levels, art is the most common (62 and 52 percent, respectively). The most common activity at the high school level (43 percent) is writing.

With only one exception, special arts activities are offered much more frequently during school hours than after school. Drama activities in primary schools are offered more often after school than in school, and dance activities are offered almost as frequently after school, as in school, for middle and high school students.

While special creative arts programs seem to have potential for helping students, survey data alone cannot shed light on the effectiveness of these programs. Additional qualitative research might reveal richer information about how students feel the arts activities in which they are involved have affected them.

SUMMER PROGRAMS

Summer programs offered by the substance abuse prevention programs are all provided on a districtwide basis, although they are housed in individual schools. These summer programs may be the only summer activities provided for the students of a particular district. Thirty-one of the 32 community school districts (97 percent) provide summer programs through the SAP program for their students. Three of the five high school boroughs provide summer programs. Summer programs are almost exclusively offered during the day--only a few programs are offered in the evening or on weekends.

The kinds of activities provided in both the primary and middle school programs are similar. The most popular summer program offerings are sports and other recreational activities. In primary school programs, the next most commonly offered activities include trips (78 percent of programs), discussion rap groups (78 percent), and arts activities (53 percent). Most of the middle school programs also offer arts, music, drama, dance, and poetry (73 percent), as well as discussion rap groups (72 percent). Other popular offerings in summer programs at both the primary and middle school levels include cultural events, positive alternatives, class lessons, individual counseling, group counseling, and tutoring.

Most participants for summer programs are selected through school staff referral, self-referral, parents, and SAP program staff. The average number of participants in primary and middle school summer programs is 133 (ps=123, ms=143, hs=580).

Most of the summer substance abuse prevention programs are evaluated through oral self-report of the students. Others are evaluated through SAP director/supervisor observations, or written self-reports by the students.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The data from this report indicate that there is substantial variability in the manner in which services are delivered in different schools. These differences are evident in staffing and in the delivery of services. While some schools are undoubtedly well-staffed with substance abuse prevention personnel, others may lack adequate staff for the needs of their students. While some districts receive fewer resources due to a relatively small and more well-to-do student population, these students may need just as much assistance in the form of substance abuse prevention services as more highly populated, poorer districts. There is also tremendous variability among districts in both the total number of SAPIS and in their levels of experience and training. The total number of SAPIS in the 32 school districts ranges from 10 to 37, reflecting the differences in resources allocated to each district, as well as the ways in which the districts choose to distribute those resources to serve their communities.

The levels of experience, training, and education of substance abuse prevention staff also vary by district. While most districts are staffed largely by Level I SAPIS, a few districts have predominantly Level II SAPIS or "other staff"--usually licensed teachers paid by the substance abuse prevention program and working as SAPIS. Differences in the level of professionalism of substance abuse prevention staff may affect the quality of services provided to students. The predominance of SAP staff who have fewer than five years of experience may be indicative of either administrative decisions (regarding

advancement, salaries, etc.) or the difficult tasks faced by SAPIS in the schools.

The information gleaned from the surveys provides a picture of who receives services in the New York City Public Schools. However, numbers can only tell part of any story. The complexity of data in this report suggests several questions and avenues for further exploration.

- SCHOOL STAFF DEVELOPMENT: School staff development serves a vital function in the New York City Public Schools, forming a link between school staff and substance abuse prevention programs. Although some form of staff development is provided in most of the New York City Public Schools, definitions of "staff development" vary widely. The "Substance Abuse Study: Year 1" report indicated that, in a sample of schools, many teachers who responded to questionnaires were less informed about the substance abuse prevention services in their schools than had been indicated in interviews with substance abuse prevention staff. Together, the "Year 1" report and this report reveal that school staff may actually be less aware of substance abuse prevention services in their schools than the SAP staff perceives.

- CLASSROOM PREVENTION LESSONS: The delivery of classroom lessons varies widely across grades. It would be valuable to ascertain through further study whether different variables in the delivery of the classroom lessons affects the impact of those lessons on students. For example, does the person presenting the lessons, the way in which that person is trained, and the curriculum used by that person have an impact on the effectiveness of the lessons? The methods for evaluating classroom lessons seem somewhat arbitrary; the effectiveness of the lessons could be better assessed with more standardized evaluations.

- PARENT WORKSHOPS: The number of participants in a given parent workshop session is extremely varied. It is not clear from the survey results why this is so. Are all volunteers taken and placed in one group or a set number of groups, regardless of how many volunteers there are? If this is the case, it may be ill advised. An assessment of optimal group size would be useful for planning future workshops. More qualitative research on this service would also be interesting. What, specifically, are the results of parent workshops? Do some strategies work better than others? Parent workshops, though offered in many schools, do not seem

to be offered frequently, especially at the high school level. Should the program be expanded/standardized to allow more sessions (if resources and funding are available), or are the parents' schedules the constraining factor?

- PARENT LEADERSHIP TRAINING: The results of the survey indicate that middle schools train parent leaders more frequently than primary schools. However, the reasons for these differences between school levels is unclear and should be investigated. There is also a discrepancy within middle schools between the numbers of parent leaders trained and actually utilized, with more parent leaders trained than used. In any case, the number of parent leaders trained and used in schools is rather low (generally between one and five). Do parent leaders carry over from year to year, accumulating over time? Or is 1-5 the total number of parent leaders in most schools?

  It would be very interesting to have more qualitative data on parent leaders' training and the outcomes of the program. How does parent leadership training affect parents' and students' lives? It would also be useful to compare different programs to see how and why they differ and what the most effective program strategies are. For example, it would be interesting to know more specifically how curricula used for parent leadership training vary.

  If the program is very useful it would probably be worth trying to expand it, as only 20 percent of primary and 23 percent of middle schools and even fewer high schools (8 percent) offer this service. Furthermore, if the program is found to be effective, it would be worthwhile to determine the reasons for the lower rate of parent involvement at the high school level.

- REGULAR INTERVENTION GROUPS: Clearly, this service is more prevalent in high schools than primary or middle schools. Does this reflect greater need, or uneven distribution of resources, or both? More in-depth research would isolate out elements of variation among high schools. Are there trends across the board, or is there greater variation than is apparent from this survey? Would increasing this service for students at lower levels be justified?

- COA/COSA GROUPS: It is somewhat unclear from the survey responses exactly how many of the COA/COSA participants are actually children of alcoholics or children of substance abusers, since in many schools, these COA/COSA groups also include students with other problems. It might be useful to ascertain <u>why</u> groups that are labeled as COA/COSA also include other students.

- FAMILY COUNSELING: It is unclear from the information received in this survey whether family counseling centers have any methods for evaluating the delivery of their services. Do families find this type of counseling useful? Such evaluations may be needed in order to determine whether more family counseling services are needed in the New York City Public Schools. Although some additional information about family counseling was gathered in the "Substance Abuse Study: Year 1" report, more evaluative data about the effectiveness of these programs would be quite valuable.

- ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS: Alternative programs are offered in very few schools--specifically, five percent of the primary schools, ten percent of the middle schools, and fifteen percent of the high schools. However, a substantial amount of variability is evident even within this relatively small number of schools, and it is readily apparent that there is no standard for these programs. While the programs seem like a potentially innovative and effective means of intervention, no data has been collected to make this determination. Future research might focus on the effectiveness of these programs, comparing the impacts of various components and procedures on the overall outcomes. For example, do programs with clear criteria for completion have a better success rate than those programs without such criteria? Do varying degrees of parental involvement impact student outcomes? The evaluation techniques used by many of the programs lack clarity and consistency. An outside evaluation of alternative programs might be more revealing of their strengths and limitations.

- AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS: After-school services are offered in approximately one-third of the schools surveyed. It would be informative to examine the actual organization and distribution of after-school services. For example, how many programs are school-based versus districtwide? What effect, if any, do these differences have on student participation in the program?

There are some issues which apply to all of the services provided by the substance abuse prevention program. While many of the services provided through the program have evaluation components, the survey data analyzed in this report indicate that most of these evaluations are quite informal and haphazard. Other services are not evaluated at all. As a result, many

schools are unable to ascertain the effectiveness of their substance abuse prevention and intervention services. More systematic, standardized, and rigorous evaluations would provide information that could then be used to improve services for students.

Each school could easily conduct self-evaluations of the substance abuse prevention services they offer to students, staff, and parents. Relatively simple feedback forms could be developed by each district (or by the central Division of Student Support Services) for each of the services offered. Students, staff, or parents who are receiving the services would then provide written feedback about those programs, outlining positive and negative aspects, how the program has affected them, and suggestions for improvements. In addition, those who deliver a particular service in the schools, whether a district director, a SAPIS, or a teacher, could reflect on how successful they perceived the service to be, from the perspective of knowledge gained, improvements in abilities of students to cope with problems or of families to communicate, or any other outcome that they <u>expected</u> or hoped to see from the service.

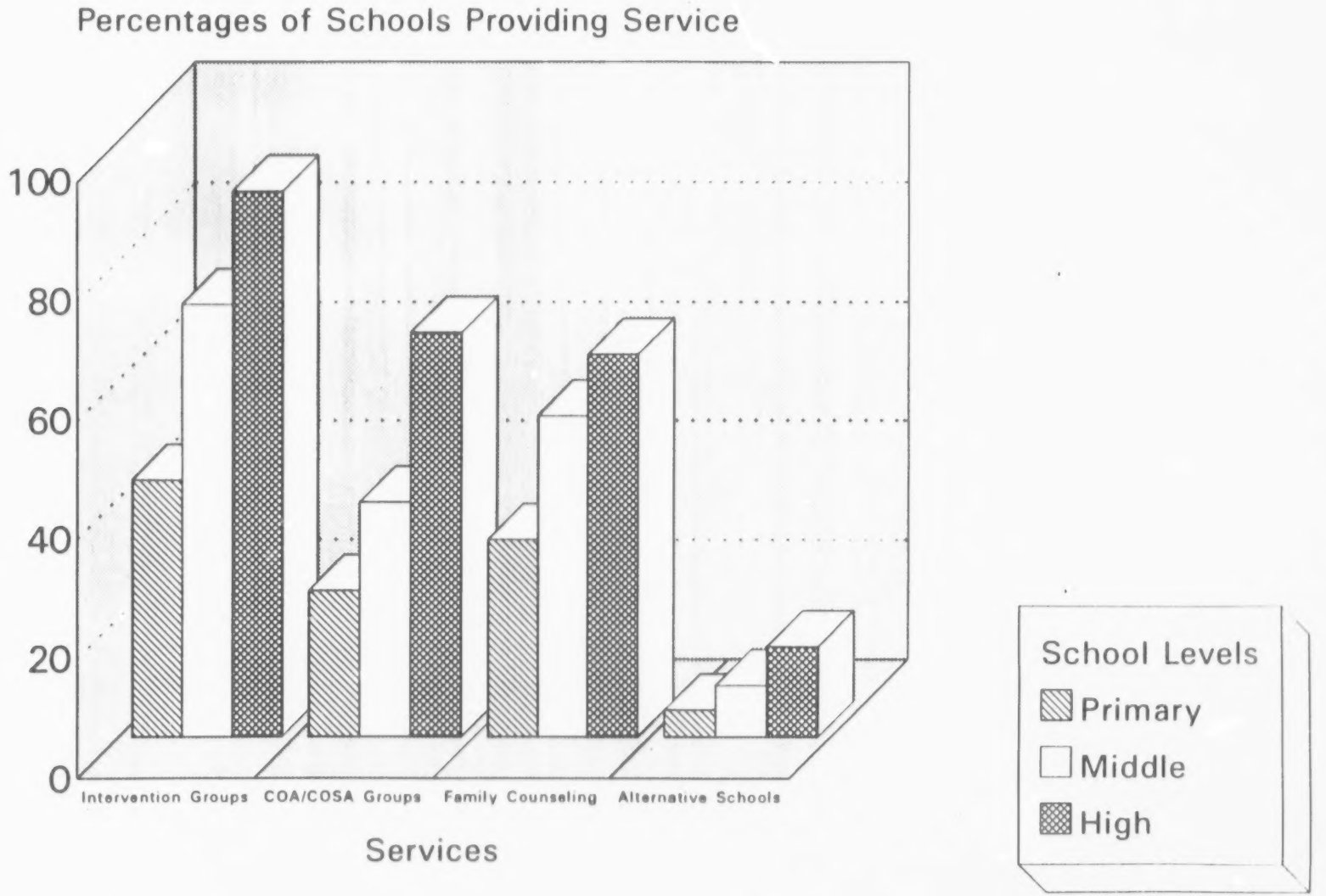
The failure of most districts/schools to more systematically evaluate the substance abuse prevention and intervention services that they offer, leaves us with a dearth of information on the actual success of these services. To better serve at-risk students--indeed, all students in New York City Public Schools--in addition to self-evaluations, more in-depth research is necessary. Qualitative research on each of the services surveyed here would yield valuable data on the strengths and weaknesses of

each service, and be a rich source of information on the impact of the program from the point of view of students, school staff, and service deliverers. Further, the effectiveness of different services and service strategies could also be explored, thus helping to determine which services are most useful to students, and which are most worthy of expansion. Differences among schools and districts in the implementation of a particular service could also be linked to variations in the outcomes of a program. For example, are COA/COSA counseling groups which are comprised only of children of alcoholics and substance abusers more successful in some way than those groups which include students with other problems? By comparing information in this way, districts operating in relative isolation from one another might be able to create a greater level of cooperation.

APPENDIX I

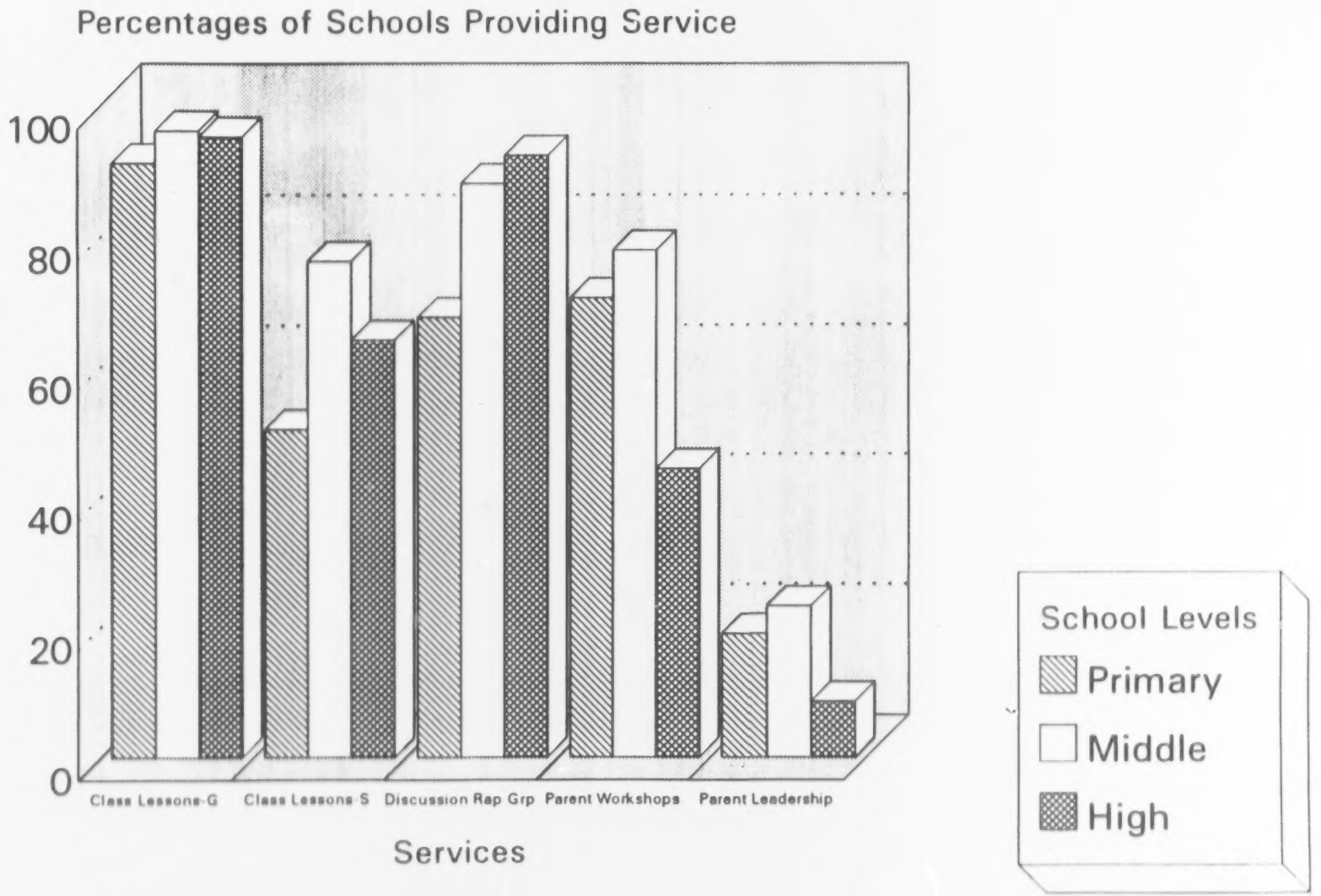
Substance Abuse Services Offered in New York City Public Schools

Intervention Services



Substance Abuse Services Offered in New York City Public Schools

Prevention Services



Substance Abuse Services Offered in New York City Public Schools

Prevention/Intervention Services